

Remarks

This Amendment is in response to an Office Action mailed February 19, 2004. In the Office Action, claims 5-8, 13-16, 20-23 and 27-30 were objected to and considered to contain allowable subject matter. However, claims 4, 12, 19 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Moreover, claim 31 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and claims 1-2, 9-10, 17 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

Claims 1, 13, 17, 27 and 31-33 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 2-9, 11-12, 14-16, 18-26 and 28-30 have been revised. In particular, Applicants have rewritten objected claims 5, 7, 15, 20, 22, and 29 to include certain limitations of their base and intervening claims. Independent claims 9 and 24 have been amended to include limitations from claims 11 as well as objected claims 13 and 27, respectively. Based on these revisions, Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Claims 4, 12, 19 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. In response, Applicants have amended these claims to correct the informalities. Withdrawal of the §112 (second paragraph) rejection is respectfully requested.

With respect to the §102(b) and §103(a) rejections, Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. However, further discussion as to the grounds for traversing these rejections is moot based on the placement of the objected claims in condition for allowance as discussed above. Withdrawal of the §102(b) and §103(a) rejections is respectfully requested.

These claims have been revised and withdrawal of the outstanding §112 rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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By


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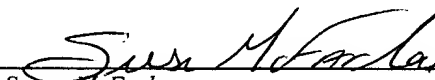
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